THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) and (b) The Government of India considers its maritime boundary with Sri Lanka settled under the Agreements concluded with Sri Lanka in 1974 and 1976. Under the Agreements, the Island of Katchatheevu lies on the Sri Lankan side of the India-Sri Lanka International Maritime Boundary Line. Both these Agreements were subsequently laid before Parliament. Under the Agreement, Indian fishermen are allowed access to Kachatheevu Island for rest, for drying of nets and for the annual St. Anthony's festival. The right of access is not understood to cover fishing rights around the island to Indian fishermen. Keeping in mind the humanitarian and livelihood dimensions for fishermen, Government reached an understanding with the Sri Lankan Government on 26th October, 2008 to put in place practical arrangements to deal with bonafide Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line.

Pakistan's activities against India

1376. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that Pakistan has been using bilateral and multilateral civilian aid against India for various disruptive purposes;

(b) if so, whether Government took up the matter with US Government to apply benchmark that aid given by USA would not be used against India;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Pakistan forces violated ceasefire agreement and fired at Indian posts during the last one month to divert attention from its troubled areas; and

(e) if so, what is the guarantee that aid would not be used against India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) Government believes that credible action is required on Pakistan's part to deal with terrorist elements directing their energy to disrupt and destabilize our economy and polity.

(b) and (c) Government has conveyed its concerns to the Government of the United States regarding the risk of diversion of US aid by Pakistan towards acquisition of weapons for use against India.

(d) and (e) Since 1 June, 2009, there has been one cease fire violation on 3 June, 2009. Government will take such steps as are necessary to safeguard the country's interests.

Solution to Tamil problem

†1377. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has prepared any plan to explore a permanent solution to Tamil problems with Government of Sri Lanka and their rehabilitation;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the assistance provided by Government of India for rehabilitation of Tamils and to send back displaced families to their residences and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) to (c) Government is of the view that the conclusion of military operations in Sri Lanka provides an opportunity to make a new beginning and pursue a lasting political settlement in Sri Lanka. The way forward lies in a peacefully negotiated political settlement within the framework of a united Sri Lanka, acceptable to all the communities in Sri Lanka including the Tamils. The National Security Advisor and Foreign Secretary visited Colombo on May 20-21, 2009 and held talks with the Sri Lankan Government. The necessity of reaching a political settlement was emphasized. On June 24, 2009, a high-level Sri Lankan delegation led by the Senior Adviser to the Sri Lankan President visited India to continue bilateral discussions. Government continues to stay engaged with the Government of Sri Lanka in this regard.

Government has emphasized that the Sri Lankan Government must focus on the tasks of rehabilitation and resettlement of the internally displaced persons. The President and Government of Sri Lanka have assured Government that Sri Lanka is resolved to resettle most of the displaced persons in their original homes within six months. In addition to the extensive humanitarian assistance provided to IDPs so far, the Government of India has committed Rs. 500 crores for the relief and rehabilitation of the internally displaced persons in Sri Lanka. With a view to facilitating speedy rehabilitation of IDPs, Government is implementing several measures including demining assistance, medical assistance, re-construction of houses, shelter material and provision of civil infrastructure.

Pakistan's efforts to build nuclear arms

†1378. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that Pakistan is engaged in making nuclear arms of new generation;

(b) if so, whether Government is also aware of the fact that Pakistan is producing enriched uranium used in making bomb, to make nuclear arms; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) Government has seen reports that Pakistan is enhancing its nuclear weapons production capacity.

(b) and (c) Pakistan has been producing enriched uranium for nuclear weapons for more than two decades. Government monitors all such developments which have a bearing on national security and is committed to taking all necessary steps to safeguard the nation's security.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.